



Press Release

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For Immediate Release

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The Land for Maine's Future program receives 33 proposals to protect over 154,000 acres of Maine's special places

Funding requests greatly exceed available resources

Thirty-three new proposals arrived in Augusta as the Land for Maine's Future Program started a new chapter in the State's land conservation efforts. Last fall the LMF Board issued a statewide call for conservation, recreation and farmland proposals after Maine voters overwhelmingly approved \$10 million for land conservation. Answering that call, applicants have responded with an exciting selection of projects totaling over \$70 million of value and requesting \$22.6 million of LMF support. Spread over 15 counties, these projects would result in the conservation of more than 154,000 acres. Twenty-one projects are located in southern and coastal areas with other significant projects located in the western mountains and in Maine's North Woods.

"These proposals represent a striking selection of Maine's best natural areas, productive farm and forest lands, and recreational gems," said LMF Director Tim Glidden. Included in the applications are river trail corridors that could anchor new tourism activity, ten farm protection projects, coastal islands, critical wildlife habitat, and thousands of acres of productive working forest land. Also included are several key acquisitions in rapidly growing towns that would protect essential open-space and provide for local recreation. State agencies are proposing additions to two existing state parks to protect against encroaching development along with additions to several wildlife management areas that protect important habitat and provide hunting opportunities.

Noting that the requests greatly outstrip available funds, LMF Chair George Lapointe said, "The Board will be faced with some challenging decisions as it weighs these wonderful opportunities. Land prices have escalated dramatically over the past five years with the result that we are falling behind in the race to conserve Maine's natural heritage". He noted that the State has been receiving inquiries for farmland protection at the rate of 500 acres per week in recent months and that the Department of Agriculture has identified ten additional farm projects that have been deferred until 2007 if funding permits. Even as the proposal period closed, LMF program staff received calls on other potential land conservation projects that could not meet the deadline.

In an independent LMF evaluation and progress report; [The Land for Maine's Future Program: Increasing the Return on a Sound Public Investment](#), published in 2004, the authors concluded

that Maine land conservation is “rightly viewed as a basic infrastructure investment in the future of Maine’s environment, economy, and cultural heritage”. Responding to this finding, the LMF Board is now considering the relationship of all proposed projects to the economy of surrounding communities in addition to their natural and recreational qualities.

The Land for Maine’s Future Program was created in 1987 in response to concerns over the loss of critical natural areas and wildlife habitat along with traditional access to undeveloped lands for hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. To date, the Land for Maine’s Future Program has protected over 240,000 acres of Maine’s best recreational and natural areas. The program also seeks to protect working farms and public access to water for fishing, swimming, boating, and commercial marine activities. Working with other state agencies and numerous local governments and charitable nonprofit groups, the Land for Maine’s Future Board adheres to a “willing seller only” policy. To learn more visit <http://www.state.me.us/spo/lmf>.

Total request

\$22.6 million (1.8 farm + 20.8 c&r)

Total match

\$ million

Total acres

Fee – 28,691

CE - 126,164

10 Farm projects

23 Conservation & Recreation

In 15 Counties

21 Projects underway

Water access	-	5
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Conservation	-	13
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Farmland	-	3
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River corridors, trails, working farmland, wildlife management areas, ecological reserves, wilderness area, working forest easement, state park protection, scenic gateways, coastal islands

Natural heritage conservation

Key assets for natural resource-based economy (tourism, farming, forest products)

IN recent months: Dept of Agric has been receiving farm protection inquiries at the rate of 500 acres/week.

Projects Delayed for 2007 - 10 landowners = 1,630 acres in 5 counties for approx. 2 million dollars

100+ farmland protection inquiries on record for approx 100,000 acres

Protected to date & pending through LMF & FRPP = 6,779 acres

The Dept goal is to conserve 250,000 acres* by 2025 (purchased = 100,000 acres and donated = 150,000 acres). From that we can extrapolate a projected LMF farmland \$ need at 3 million per year (3,500 acres per year) for 20 years OR \$60,000,000 protect 70,000 acres